

Quand il faut choisir une langue :
Les poètes de la Caraïbe anglophone

Corentin Jégou
Nantes Université - CRINI



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*A Work of Fiction in Tribute to
Louise Langdon Norton Little,
Working Mother and Activist,
Mother of Malcolm X
and Seven Siblings*

Ocean Stirrings

MERLE COLLINS



Claude McKay

Source: [Wikipedia](#), [Public Domain](#)

Voir aussi :

[Claude McKay à Moscou dans les années 1920](#)

QUASHIE TO BUCCRA

You tas'e² petater³ an' you say it sweet,
But you no⁴ know how hard we wuk⁵ fe it;
You want a basketful fe quattiewut⁶,
'Cause you no know how 'tiff de bush fe cut⁷.

De cowitch⁸ under which we hab fe 'toop,
De shamar⁹ lyin' t'ick like pumpkin soup,
Is killin' somet'ing¹⁰ for a naygur man;
Much less¹¹ de cutlass workin' in we han'.

De sun hot like when fire ketch a¹² town;
Shade-tree look temptin', yet we caan' lie down,
Aldough we wouldn' eben ef we could,
Causen we job must finish soon an' good.¹³

De bush cut done, de bank dem we deh dig¹⁴,
But dem caan' 'tan' sake o' we naybor pig;
For so we mou' it up he root it do'n¹⁵,
An' we caan' 'peak sake o' we naybor tongue¹⁶.

Aldough de vine is little, it can bear;
It wantin' not'in' but a little care:
You see petater tear up groun', you run,¹⁷
You laughin', sir, you must be t'ink a fun.¹⁸

De fie!' pretty? It couldn't less 'an dat¹⁹,
We wuk de bes',²⁰ an' den de lan' is fat;
We dig de row dem eben in a line,
An' keep it clean—den so it *mus'* look fine.

You tas'e petater an' you say it sweet,
But you no know how hard we wuk fe it;
Yet still de hardship always melt away
Wheneber it come roun' to reapin' day;

In Claude McKay, *Songs of Jamaica* (1912)

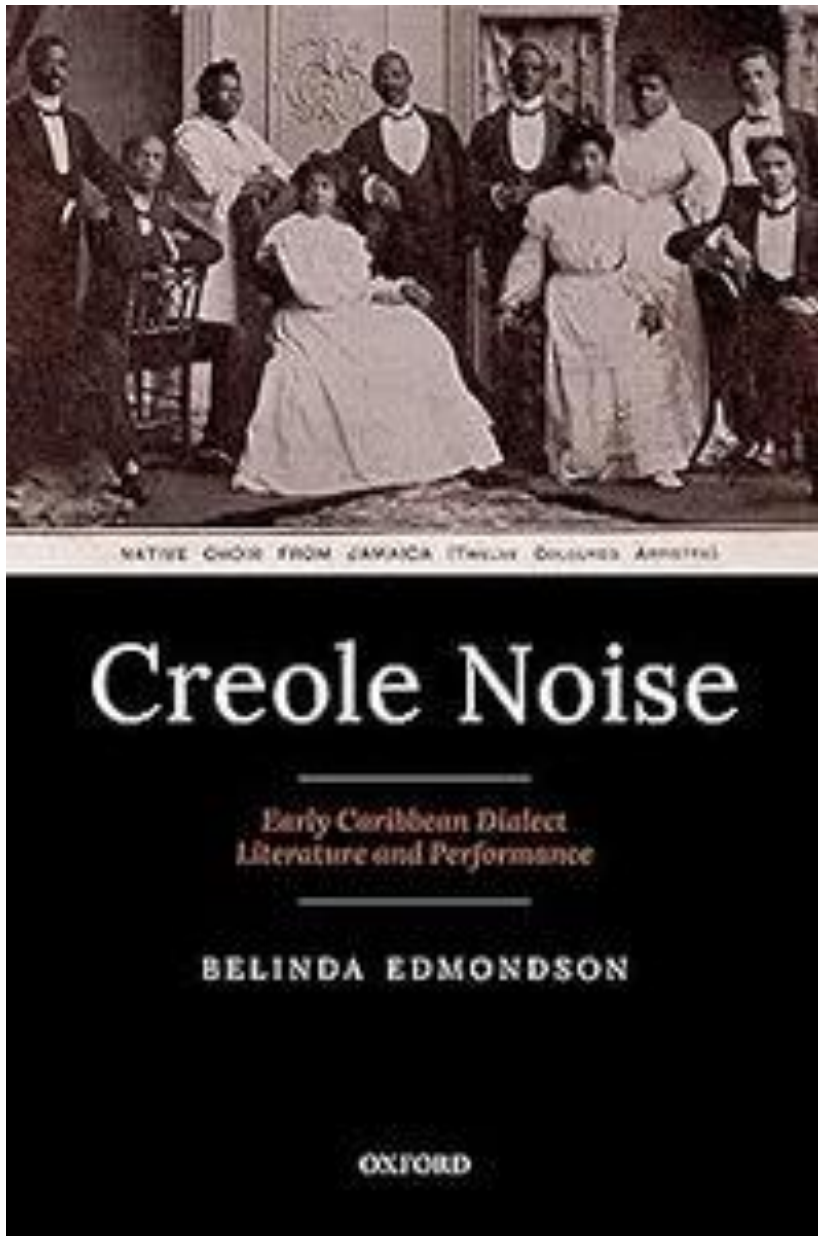
Les lecteurs de ce volume seront intéressés d'apprendre qu'ils y trouveront les pensées et sentiments d'un paysan jamaïcain de pur sang noir. Le jeune poète, âgé de 22 ans, a passé son enfance dans les profondeurs du pays, et bien qu'il se soit récemment établi dans le quartier le plus peuplé de Kingston, son cœur demeure dans les collines de Clarendon.

Walter Jekyll, "Préface", in Claude McKay, *Songs of Jamaica* (1912)

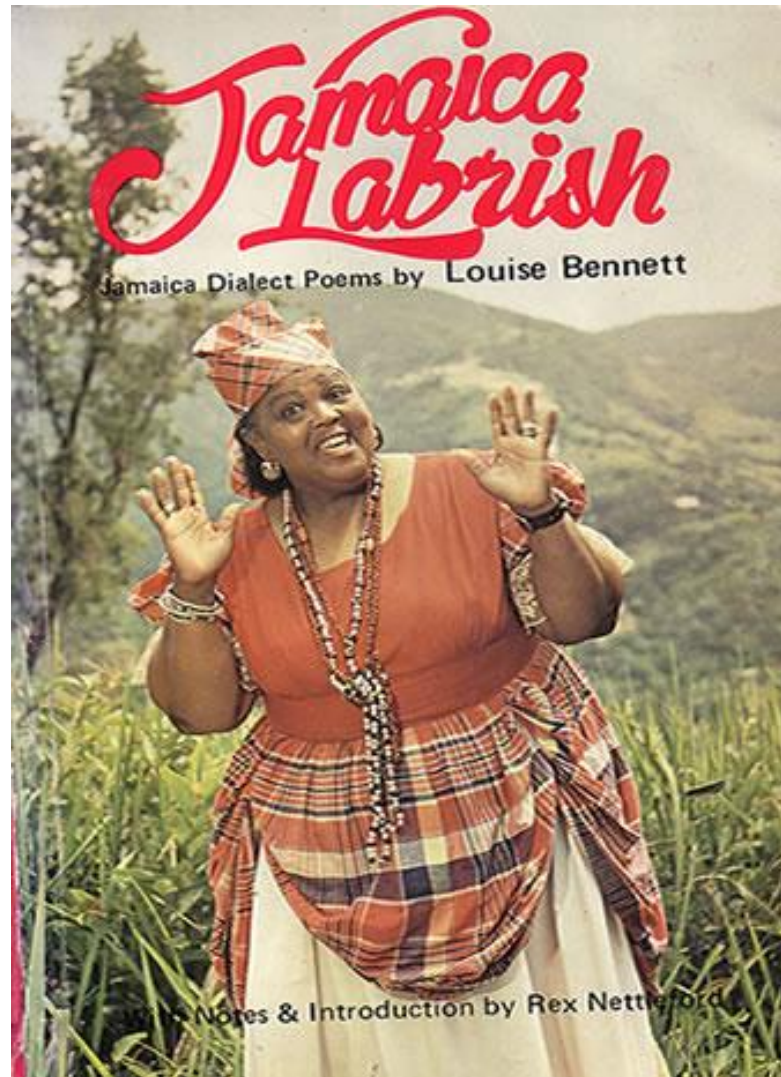
QUASHIE TO BUCCRA

1. The buccra (white man) looking over the hedge at the Black man's field, is addressed by the latter as follows.
2. Taste.
3. Sweet potato (*Ipomaa Batatas.*)
4. Don't.
5. Work.
6. Quattiworth: quattie, a quarter of sixpence.
7. Because you don't know how stuff the bush is to cut, *i.e.* , what hard work it is to fell the trees and clear the land.
8. *Mucuna pruriens* .
9. Shamebush, the prickly sensitive plant (*Mimosa Pudica.*)
10. Terrible stuff.
11. More.
12. In.
13. Because our job must be quickly and thoroughly done.

14. The clearing of the land done, we dig the banks—kind of terraces on the steep hill side—but owing to our neighbour's pig they cannot stand. "Bank dem" = banks. This intrusive "dem" must be tacked closely to the preceding word. It occurs again below—"row dem."
15. For no sooner do we mould it up, than he (the pig) roots it (the bank) down. "Down" is pronounced very short, and is a good rhyme to "tongue."
16. And we cannot complain, for this would "bring confusion," *i.e.* , cause a row.
17. A piece of humourous exaggeration: "When you see the potatoes tearing up the ground in their rapid growth you will run to save yourself from being caught and entangled in the vines."
18. You are laughing, sir—perhaps you think I am exaggerating.
19. Less than that = be otherwise.
20. We work as well as we possibly can.



Belinda Edmondson,
Creole Noise: Early Caribbean Dialect Literature and Performance,
Oxford UP, 2022



Louise Bennett

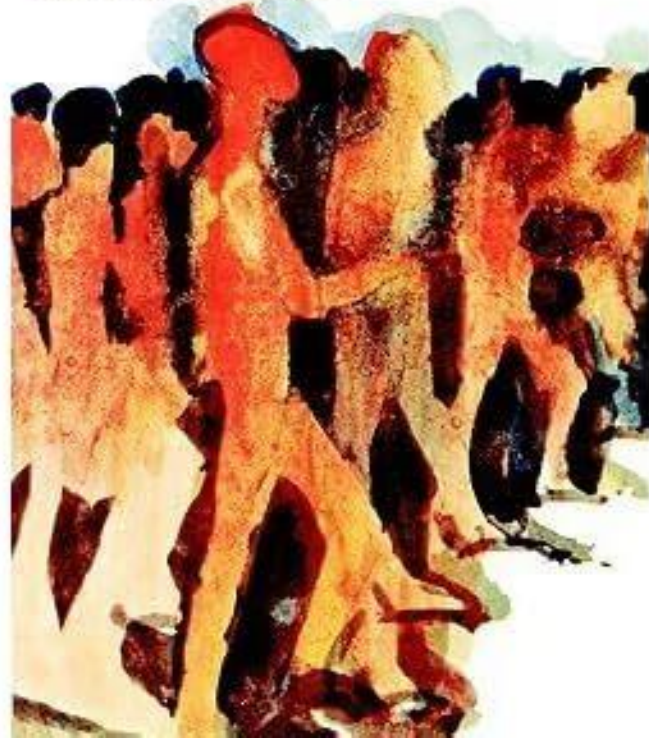
EDWARD BRATHWAITE

THE ARRIVANTS

A New World Trilogy

Rights of Passage

Islands Masks

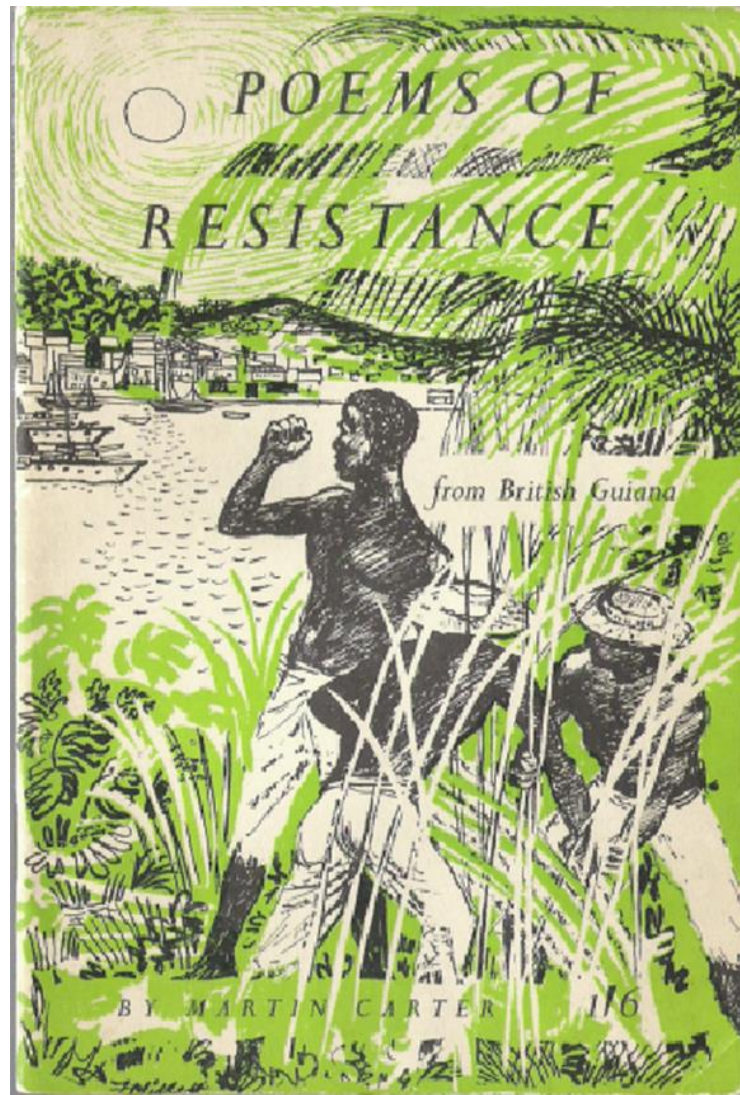


SLAVE SONG



David Dabydeen

Winner of the 1984 Commonwealth Poetry Prize



'Hear how a baai a taak Like BBC!
Look how a baai a waak
Like white maan,
Caak-hat pun he head, wrist-watch pun he haan!
Yu dadee na Dabydeen, plant gyaden near Blackbush Pass?

David Dabydeen, "Two Cultures", in *Slave Song* (1984)



I come from the nigger yard of yesterday
leaping from the oppressor's hate
and scorn of myself.

I come to the world with scars upon my soul
wounds upon my body, fury in my hands.

I turn to the histories of men and the lives of peoples.

I examine the shower of sparks and the wealth of the dreams.

I am pleased with the glories and sad with the sorrows
rich with the riches, poor with the loss

From the nigger yard of yesterday I come with my burden.

To the world of tomorrow I turn with my strength.

“I Come from the Nigger Yard”, Martin Carter
Screenshot of *The Terror and the Time* (1977).

Source: [Youtube](#)

Now to begin the road:

broken land ripped like a piece of cloth
iron cartwheel rumbling in the night
hidden man consistent in the dark
sea of dayclean washing on the shore
heart of orphan seeking orphanage.

Now to begin the road:

The bleeding music of appellant man
starts like a song but fades into a groan.
The cupric star will burn as blue as death.
His hopes are whitened starched with grief and pain
yet questing man is heavy laden cart
whose iron wheels will rumble in the night
whose iron wheels will spark against the stone
or granite burden of the universe.

Now to begin the road:

hidden cartman fumbling for a star—
brooding city like a mound of coal—
till journey done, till prostrate coughing hour
with sudden welcome **take** him to his dream
with sudden farewell **send** him to his grave.

Martin Carter, “Cartman of Dayclean”